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PREFACE.

THE issue of the December number terminates another volume of 'THE ZOOLOGIST,' and, although our pages have been necessarily—and, we hope, temporarily—reduced to the status of a previous standard, our contributors have worthily upheld the zoological position of the Journal.

In MAMMALIA, during what we may call the "Okapia" year, we have published full obituary notices of the Quagga (*Equus quagga*), and the Blaauwbok (*Hippotragus leucophaeus*), and given illustrations of those now apparently extinct South African animals; while from the same region we have received an explanation of some tradition respecting the Scaly Ant-Eater (*Mnis temmincki*). Our own British species have not been neglected, and the notes thereon are as full and interesting as usual.

Of course, in AVES we have found our strength, and the papers and notes thereon show no diminution in the activity of our ornithological contributors. Among so much information we can here refer to few features, but the record of the Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) breeding in Ireland, and that of the American Wigeon (*M. americana*) breeding in Iceland, are new facts of the highest ornithological interest.

REPTILIA have not incited so many recorded observations as might have been wished, but we have noticed the publication of a book on British species, in which is reproduced much that had been previously recorded by the author in these pages.

PISCES.—We are still anxious for more information on this subject in 'THE ZOOLOGIST.' At present there is a distinct "slump" in Fish contributions. Perhaps the most interesting record we received was that of the occurrence of the File-Fish (*Balistes capriscus*) off Brighton.

Other Orders of British animal life seem, so far as our pages are concerned, to excite small interest. We hope in future volumes that this cannot be said.

Another feature in 1901 has been a biographical element, or what we may venture to style a commencement of "patristic zoology." Thus we have had an appreciation of "Dante as a Naturalist," and a most interesting paper on "Early Ornithologists," written, alas! by an old contributor whose valued communications we shall never receive again.

Everywhere Zoology is an advancing science. This year the International Congress held its meeting at Berlin, while the publication of books relating to animal life is ever on the increase; and, though much of this literature may be of a compilative description, and designed for "popular" uses, it still proves that the reading public are not uninterested in the animal life around them. On all sides Zoology receives a fresh support. It is no longer the sluggard who is bid to study the way of the Ant, but the philosopher, and even the politician. Evolution has received its strongest credentials from Zoology, and Evolution is now a force recognized as much in the life of the city as in that of the fields. We can realize the past when the zoologist would be considered a "crank"; we well understand the modern equivalent of estimating the science as a "hobby"; but it only remains for zoologists to render it one of the factors in assisting to explain the mysteries of our own existence; and this may perhaps be best achieved by the bionomical method of 'THE ZOOLOGIST.'

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